IN THE CLAIMS:

1.   (Currently amended) A processing unit connectable to a communications network, said processing unit ~~having~~ comprising:

a data carrier reader operable to read a network identity from a portable data carrier [[,]] ;

a read/write register, wherein said processing unit is operable to write said network identity read from said portable data carrier into said read/write register; and

a register flag operatively associated with said read/write register, wherein said processing unit is operable to set said register flag when said network identity is read from said portable data carrier;

wherein said processing unit is operable to determine whether said register flag is set and to use said network identity for communicating via said communications network if said register flag is set, wherein if said register flag is not set said processing unit being operable ~~on being powered up to check for the presence of a~~ to determine whether said portable data carrier is present in said data carrier reader, ~~and, when a said data carrier is present, to use the~~ wherein if said portable data carrier is present in said data carrier reader said network identity is read from said portable data carrier for communicating via the communications network, said network identity is stored in said read/write register, and said register flag is set, wherein if said portable data carrier is absent from said data carrier reader said processing unit is operable to prevent access to the communications network.

2.   (Currently amended) The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein ~~the processing unit is operable, on detecting the absence of a said data carrier, to prevent access to said network~~ , after said network identity is stored in said read/write register and said register flag is set, said processing unit is operable to use said network identity stored in said read/write

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register for communicating via said communications network even if said portable data carrier is removed from said data carrier reader.

3. (Currently amended) The processing unit of Claim [[2]] 1, wherein the processing unit is operable, on detecting the absence of [[a]] said portable data carrier, to record a fault condition.

4. (Currently amended) The processing unit of Claim [[2]] 1, wherein said processing unit is operable to determine whether said register flag is set during a power-up sequence, wherein if said register flag is not set the processing unit is operable, on detecting the absence of [[a]] said portable data carrier, to terminate its power-up sequence.

5. (Currently amended) The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein the portable data carrier is a memory card and said data carrier reader is a memory card reader.

6. (Currently amended) The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein said portable data carrier is a smart card and said data carrier reader is a smart card reader.

7. (Currently amended) The processing unit as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said data carrier reader includes a securing mechanism to hinder removal of said portable data carrier when present in said data carrier reader.

8. (Original) The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein said processing unit is replaceably mountable in a carrier.

9. (Currently amended) The processing unit of Claim [[7]] 8, wherein the carrier is a rack.

10. (Original) The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein said processing unit is a rack-mountable computer server.

11.   (Currently amended) The processing unit of Claim 10, wherein said rack-mountable computer server includes a service processor, wherein the service processor is operable to control the reading of A computer server system comprising a communications network for providing data communications to devices connected to said network, and at least one processing unit connectable to a communications network, said processing unit having a data carrier reader operable to read a network identity from a portable data carrier, said processing unit being operable on being powered up to check for the presence of a said data carrier, and when a said data carrier is present to use the network identity from said portable data carrier for communicating via the communications network.

12.   (Currently amended) A method of operating a processing unit connected to a communications network, said processing unit having including a data carrier reader for reading a data carrier, a read/write register, and a register flag, wherein the data carrier includes carrying a network identity for use in communicating via said communications network [[;]] , wherein the method comprises comprising the processing unit, on being powered up:

        — checking for the presence of a said data carrier; and
        — when a data carrier is present, using the network identity from the data carrier for communicating via the network

        determining whether the register flag is set;

        if the register flag is set, reading the network identity from the read/write register for communicating via the communications network; and

        if the register flag is not set, determining whether the data carrier is present in the data carrier reader, wherein if the data carrier is present in the data carrier reader the network identity is read from the data carrier for communicating via the communications network,

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the network identity is stored in the read/write register, and the register flag is set, wherein if the data carrier is absent from the data carrier reader access to the communications network is prevented.

13.   (Currently amended) The method of ~~claims~~ Claim 12, ~~comprising the processing unit, on detecting the absence of a said data carrier, preventing access to said network~~ wherein after the network identity is stored in the read/write register and the register flag is set, the processing unit using the network identity stored in the read/write register for communicating via the communications network even if the data carrier is removed from the data carrier reader.

14.   (Currently amended) The method of Claim 13, ~~wherein~~ further comprising the processing unit, on detecting the absence of [[a]] said data carrier, ~~records~~ recording a fault condition.

15.   (Currently amended) The method of Claim 13, ~~wherein~~ comprising the processing unit determining whether the register flag is set during a power-up sequence, wherein if the register flag is not set the processing unit, on detecting the absence of [[a]] said data carrier, terminates its power-up sequence.

16.   (Currently amended) The method of Claim 12, further comprising a user manually providing [[a]] said data carrier ~~carrying~~ including [[a]] said network identity to said data carrier reader ~~to prior to powering up the processing unit~~.

17.   (Original) The method of Claim 16, wherein the data carrier is a memory card.

18.   (Original) The method of Claim 16, wherein said data carrier is a smart card.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 16, further comprising securing said data carrier with respect to said data carrier reader.

20. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 12, wherein said processing unit is replaceable, ~~and the step of connecting a processing unit to a computer network comprises:~~ [[-]] <u>further comprising</u> disconnecting a first processing unit from said communications network [[,]] and [[-]] connecting a second ~~replacement~~ processing unit to said communications network in place of said first processing unit.

21. (Currently amended) <u>The method of Claim 12, wherein the processing unit is a rack-mountable computer server, wherein the rack-mountable computer server includes a service processor, further comprising the service processor controlling the reading of the network identity from the data carrier for communicating via the communications network</u> ~~A portable data carrier configured to be removably inserted in a data reader of a processing unit connectable to a communications network, the data carrier carrying a network identity for the processing unit to use for communicating via the network, the data carrier being readable by processing unit on being powered up when the data carrier is present, whereby the network identity from the data carrier is used by the processing unit for communicating via the network.~~

22-24. (Cancelled)

25. (New) A computer system comprising:

a communications network for providing data communications to devices connected to the communications network; and

at least one processing unit connectable to the communications network, the processing unit comprising:

a data carrier reader operable to read a network identity from a portable data carrier;

a read/write register, wherein the processing unit is operable to write the network identity read from the portable data carrier into the read/write register; and

a register flag operatively associated with the read/write register, wherein the processing unit is operable to set the register flag when the network identity is read from the portable data carrier;

wherein the processing unit is operable to determine whether the register flag is set and to use the network identity for communicating via the communications network if the register flag is set, wherein if the register flag is not set the processing unit is operable to determine whether the portable data carrier is present in the data carrier reader, wherein if the portable data carrier is present in the data carrier reader the network identity is read from the portable data carrier for communicating via the communications network, the network identity is stored in the read/write register, and the register flag is set, wherein if the portable data carrier is absent from the data carrier reader the processing unit is operable to prevent access to the communications network.

26. (New) The computer system of claim 25, wherein, after the network identity is stored in the read/write register and the register flag is set, the processing unit is operable to use the network identity stored in the read/write register for communicating via the communications network even if the portable data carrier is removed from the data carrier reader.

27. (New) The computer system of claim 25, wherein said computer system is a server system, wherein the server system includes a service processor which is operable to

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control the reading of the network identity from the portable data carrier for communicating via the communications network.